

The health care debate sidelined many important pieces of legislation, but Congress still had time to pass many important bills. Next year should see a lot of action on a range of legislation.

Here are some of the pieces of legislation I introduced in 2009, along with bill status. To view all my bills, click the Legislation tab to the left.

Ocean Conservation, Education, and National Strategy for the 21st Century Act (H.R. 21), introduced on January 6. The Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife held a hearing on the bill in June, about the same time the White House created an Ocean Policy Task Force to look into how we finally get this process under way. The task force released its recommendations on December 9, and we'll be looking how to supplement those recommendations with legislative action early in 2010.

GPCI Justice Act (H.R. 2820), introduced on June 6. This bill would increase Medicare reimbursements rates for our local doctors to make sure our seniors don't lose access to health care. The language from the bill was included in the House comprehensive health insurance reform bill, and I'll be fighting to keep it in the final conference bill next year.

Pinnacles National Park Act (H.R. 3444), introduced on July 31. This bill would change the status of the Pinnacles National Monument to a National Park. It's an important bill for San Benito and Monterey counties, an effort to increase tourism revenues. The Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands held a hearing on November 17, where I testified in support of the bill and read portions of a letter of support from documentary producer Ken Burns, who strongly endorsed the bill.

The **Children's Fruit and Vegetable Act** H.R. (4333), introduced on December 16. This bill's goals are to get more fruits and vegetables into our school meals to increase the health of our children. It would instruct USDA to work with schools in a variety of ways to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, including purchasing more fruits and vegetables, promoting the use of fruit and vegetable bars (a proven strategy to increase produce consumption) and increase the use of farm-to-cafeteria programs. This bill has a lot of support, and I'm working to have it included in next year's Child Nutrition Act reauthorization.

Big Sur Forest Service Management Unit Act (H.R. 4040), to create a separate funding source for the Big Sur portion of the Los Padres National Forest, add portions of five local rivers to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and establish other management tools.

Other bills I introduced in 2009:

- **Truth in Trials Act** (H.R. 3939), to allow state laws to be used as a defense in federal medical marijuana trials.
- **Clean Cruise Ship Act** (H.R. 3888), to strengthen the Clean Water Act to create coastal zones where cruise ships are prohibited from dumping waste, strengthen current waste treatment standards and increase surveillance to ensure compliance by the industry
- **Proud to Be an American Citizen Act** (H.R. 2363), to allow the Department of Homeland Security to host citizenship ceremonies in local communities on or around the 4th of July. This bill was included in a larger immigration reform package introduced in early December.
- **Defense Communities Assistance Act** (H.R. 2295), to instruct the Department of Defense to expedite transfer of shuttered military bases to local communities using a no-cost conveyance tool. Language based on this bill was included in the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2010.
- **Peace Corps Expansion Act** (H.R. 1066), to called for a funding level of \$450 million. This level was included in the House State-Foreign Operations funding bill, with a compromise reached between House and Senate negotiators of \$400 million.
- **Southern Sea Otter Recovery and Research Act** (H.R. 556), to increase funding for research and recovery efforts aimed at the Southern sea otter. The bill passed the House on July 28. We're awaiting action in the Senate.
- **Ocean Research and Exploration Enhancement Act** (H.R. 366), to create two important ocean research programs: the National Undersea Research Program and the National Ocean Exploration Program. This bill was included in an omnibus public lands package that was signed into law.

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